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UNCLAS ZAGREB 000288

SIPDIS

STATE FOR OPS CENTER, S/ES, EUR, EUR/SCE (NARDI),
EUR/PA/PD (HORNBuckle)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [HR](#)

SUBJECT: CROATIAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF SECRETARY OF
STATE POWELL'S FEBRUARY 5 SPEECH TO THE UNITED
NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

REF: STATE 34089

1. CROATIAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE SECRETARY'S FEBRUARY 5
PRESENTATION TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE AND
STRAIGHTFORWARD. TIMING OF THE SECRETARY'S PRESENTATION
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HELPED: IT OCCURRED SHORTLY BEFORE CROATIA'S NIGHTLY NEWS
BROADCASTS, FACILITATING EXTENSIVE PLAY ON TV AND RADIO
NEWS. MUCH FOCUS HAS BEEN ON THE VILNIUS GROUP'S STATEMENT
OF SUPPORT FOR THE U.S. POSITION ISSUED AFTER POWELL'S
PRESENTATION (REFTEL). WHILE NOT AN INCOMING NATO MEMBER
LIKE MOST OTHERS IN THE V-10, CROATIA BELONGS TO THIS
GROUP.

2. THERE HAVE BEEN FEW COMMENTARIES YET. ONE WAS
FEATURED PROMINENTLY IN THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED DAILY
"VJESNIK" ON FEBRUARY 6 BY BRUNO LOPANDIC UNDER THE
HEADLINE "CROATIA WILL HAVE TO TAKE A CLEARER POSITION
TOWARD THE IRAQI CRISIS." LOPANDIC WROTE THAT THE VILNIUS
GROUP STATEMENT WAS INITIATED BY BRUCE JACKSON. HE NOTED
THAT CROATIA'S INSISTENCE ON SIGNING SUCH A DOCUMENT WILL
"FORCE THE CROATIAN GOVERNMENT TO DECIDE MORE CLEARLY" HOW
CROATIA SHOULD POSITION ITSELF ON THE ISSUE.

3. THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL GOC REACTION YET OTHER THAN
THE V-10 STATEMENT TO THE SECRETARY'S PRESENTATION. WE
EXPECT MORE COMMENTARIES AND ANALYSIS IN COMING DAYS AND
WILL REPORT SEPTEL.

4. FEBRUARY 6 HEADLINES IN THE CROATIAN DAILIES:

-- ZAGREB-BASED MASS-CIRCULATION "JUTARNJI LIST" - "SUPPORT
FOR WAR AGAINST SADDAM - CROATIAN YES TO ATTACK ON IRAQ"

-- ZAGREB-BASED MASS-CIRCULATION "VEČERNJI LIST" - "CROATIA
TOO SIDES WITH BUSH"

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-- ZAGREB-BASED GOVERNMENT-OWNED "VJESNIK" - "IRAQ IS
HIDING WEAPONS, CHEATING INSPECTORS, AND WILL NOT STOP
UNLESS SOMEONE PUTS AN END TO IT"

-- RIJEKA-BASED "NOVI LIST" - "POWELL: IRAQ HAS NOT DONE
ANYTHING TO DISARM ITSELF."

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